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SUBJECT: JAMAICA RESPONSE TO LIBERTAD ACT, TITLE III,
DECEMBER 2008

REF: A. SECSTATE 126578
[1](#)B. KINGSTON 482
[1](#)C. SECSTATE 52541
[1](#)D. KINGSTON 414

Classified By: DCM James T. Heg for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Post has provided responses to questions listed in reftel A. On July 23 while speaking at an event hosted by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI) on the theme "Cuba and its Neighbors: The Challenges of Change," Prime Minister (PM) Bruce Golding said: "My hope is that within a short time we can see an end to the isolation of Cuba." He added that "there are issues that would have to be dealt with, including democracy and fundamental rights which are not merely sovereign issues, but are universal issues that have been embraced by the international community." Golding said he supports an approach of "constructive engagement with Cuba."

[1](#)2. (SBU) There have been no resolutions in the Jamaican parliament condemning human rights abuses in Cuba.

[1](#)3. (C) PM Golding attending the Third CARICOM/CUBA Summit which began on December 8 was held in Cuba. Meetings include discussions on the financial, energy and food crises as well climate change and the impact these have on the Caribbean region. On December 8, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kenneth Baugh announced the appointment of Mr. A'Dale Robinson, a career Foreign Service Officer, as Ambassador to Cuba. Robinson will arrive in January 2009, and succeeds Ambassador Elinor Sherlock. On June 15, Opposition Leader and People's National Party (PNP) President Portia Simpson Miller led a delegation of party officials on a three-day visit to Cuba. Other members of the delegation included PNP Chairman Robert Pickersgill, Vice President Angela Brown-Burke, General Secretary Peter Bunting, former Foreign Affairs Minister Anthony Hylton, and National Executive Member Paul Burke.

[1](#)4. (SBU) PM Golding, accompanied by Mrs. Golding, Deputy Prime Minister Baugh, Minister of Tourism Ed Bartlett, Minister of Health Ruddy Spencer, Minister of Water and Housing Horace Chang, and Minister of Agriculture Chris Tufton, visited Havana from May 5 - 7 (reftel B). This was the first major visit by Golding to Cuba since taking office and indicates a closer relationship between the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)-led government and Cuba under the new leadership of Raul Castro. During the three-day visit to Havana, PM Golding:

A) signed framework agreements for bilateral cooperation in the areas of agriculture, health, tourism, water resources,

and housing;

B) reiterated his call for lifting of the U.S. embargo, and for constructive U.S. engagement with Cuba;

C) sought to assure the Cubans that, under his Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Government, longstanding bilateral cooperation would continue (reftel B).

15. (SBU) After Hurricanes Ike and Gustav the GOJ said The Jamaican Defense Force Coast Guard delivered humanitarian assistance to Cuba on September 20, including canned and other non-perishable foods, pharmaceuticals, bedding and water. The shipment consisted of two 40-foot shipping containers and half of one 20-foot shipping container. The mission was coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management along with several private sector firms.

16. (SBU) Post is unaware of any specific Jamaican investments in Cuba or any Jamaican firm with a commercial presence in Cuba. Post is not aware of participation by host country businesses in the Havana Trade Fair. However, Jamaicans generally oppose U.S. policy towards Cuba, which hampers post's efforts to gather accurate investment data.

17. (SBU) In regard to the recently signed bilateral agreements, Golding reportedly said "one of the areas to be explored is the possibility of multiple destination marketing where visitors can purchase a package through which they could spend some time in Jamaica and some time in Cuba. In

agriculture, the cooperation envisioned appears to be in greenhouse technology. The PM reportedly discussed the need to protect the two countries' territorial waters from drug smugglers. In addition to the framework agreements for bilateral cooperation signed in May, there is also a CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement signed July 5, 2000 (Jamaica is a CARICOM member). Cuba remains a significant export market for Jamaica, with exports of USD 9 million for 2006 (2007 figures will be available soon). Imports for the same period were USD 2.8 million. Jamaican exports include pig feed, garments, and scrap metal. Imports from Cuba include copper, cement, clay construction materials, and cigars. The GOJ, through the Export-Import Bank, has an established line of credit with Banco Nacional de Cuba in order to facilitate exports.

18. (C) Although Cuban political involvement in Jamaica was strong at one time, it has now dwindled. Historically in Jamaica, JLP Governments generally have been less sympathetic to the Cuban regime than those of the opposition People's National Party (PNP). The end of Fidel Castro's control of Cuba appears to be leading to closer ties with the GOJ. The Cuban government has continued to provide significant social support through educational scholarships and the occasional deployment of medical personnel. The medical program "Mision Milagro" (Miracle Mission) provides free medical eye care in Cuba to Caribbean residents. The service is used by people with cataracts or other treatable eye conditions. In December 2008 Raul Castro announced he would build eye-care clinics in Guyana, St. Lucia and Jamaica. Cuba also provided over four million energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs to households since February, 2006. (Note: the public relations value for Cuba of the light bulb exchange was muted, as it is the subject of an ongoing GOJ corruption investigation under which the former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller (PSM) accrued a bill of USD 3.95 million for the distribution of the bulbs. It appears GOJ officials awarded lucrative contracts to distribute the bulbs to two firms recently incorporated by close friends or relatives. Parliamentarian Kern Spencer has been indicted on charges of corruption related to the case, his case is making its way through the courts. End Note).

19. (C) Post continues to believe that suspension of the right

to bring action in U.S. courts against entities and nationals trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba is necessary to U.S. interests. Singling out Jamaican entities or nationals for prosecution would be counterproductive in achieving other USG objectives. In post,s view, proceeding with the implementation of Title III of the Libertad Act would seriously complicate, and perhaps even compromise, our efforts in areas of agreement. Actions against Jamaican nationals would likely provoke a strong response from GOJ.
Johnson